

Children's Newspaper

Every Wednesday—Threepence

FOUNDED BY ARTHUR MEE

No. 1710, December 29, 1951

Wishing You All a Very Happy Christmas

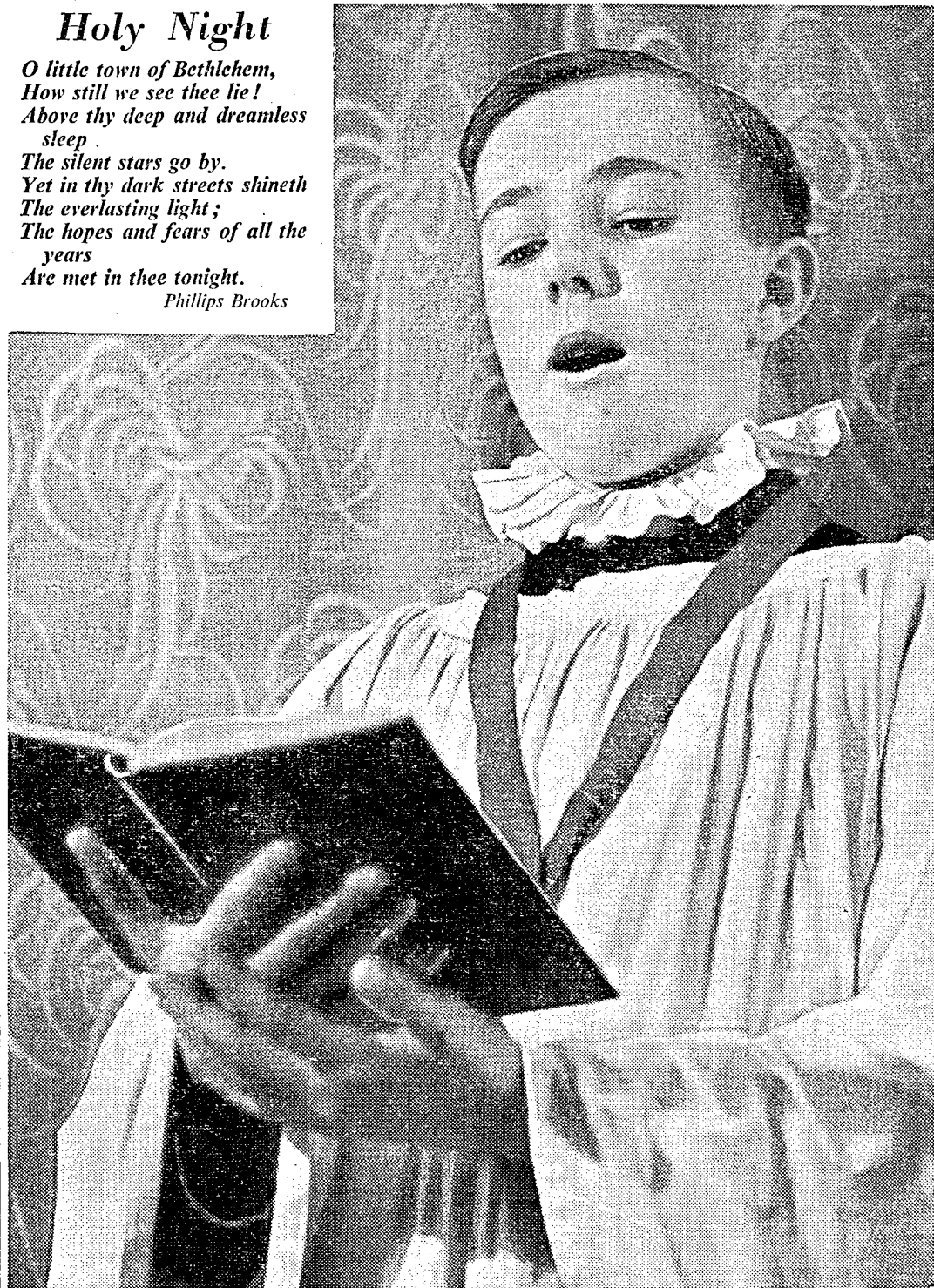
Holy Night

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless
sleep

The silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the
years

Are met in thee tonight.

Phillips Brooks



SAILORS MAKE MERRY

This is a festive season wherever
they may be

CHRISTMAS DAY in the Navy is celebrated, as far as possible, just as this festive occasion is on shore—even to the decorations.

For some days before, parties of men can be seen returning to their ships laden with great bunches of holly and evergreens, and even mistletoe, which are carefully stowed away until Christmas Eve.

Then, before darkness falls, the sailors swarm up to the mastheads and yardarms to fix these unseamenlike adornments in position to give the ship a festive appearance. In the men's messes and officers' quarters, holly and paper-chains are tastefully arrayed, softening the severe lines of the grey steel walls.

No longer does the modern sailorman have to prepare his own Christmas dinner. Under the modern messing system the Supply Officer is able to provide a truly lavish menu for Jack's Christmas Day, which is prepared in well-fitted galleys by expert cooks.

Early on the morning of Christmas Day the messes are given a special clean up and the finishing touches put to the decorations. Little work is done when breakfast is over, and after prayers on the quarterdeck the real business of the day begins, the chief item being "Rounds."

ALL DRESSED UP

The ship's "funny party," composed of a number of Lower Deck comedians, disappears into some secret hide-out, from which later they emerge clad in the weirdest garb they can contrive.

Their leader, usually the youngest rating in the ship, is solemnly dressed in an old cocked hat, with a disreputable-looking frock coat with tarnished epaulettes hanging from the shoulders, and a number of chalked rings round the coatsleeves to indicate his "rank."

A broomstick dangles from his sword belt, and his feet are thrust into a pair of sea boots decorated with outsize spurs. With him walks the Master-at-Arms dressed in a suit of sailor's bell-bottoms a size too small for him, his cap on the back of his head.

TWO CAPTAINS

Accompanied by a "squeegee band," composed of the funny party performing upon all manner of instruments from a jew's harp to a bugle, the boy "captain" marches aft.

Here the real captain and officers, hardly able to conceal their mirth, await the traditional invitation to do the rounds of the messdecks. Into each gaily decorated mess goes the captain and his aides with a seasonable greeting for the men.

When the last "Merry Christ-

Drop in the Ocean

Men on two of the weather ships stationed in the North Atlantic will fish their Christmas dinner, mail, and parcels out of the sea—after these have been dropped from the air by parachute.

The ships, based at Greenock on the Clyde, are manned by crews of 50, including seven experts from the Air Ministry.

mas" has been exchanged, the captain and officers return to the quarterdeck. Then the Chief Boatswain's Mate sounds off the "pipe down" by blowing a long, lusty blast on his whistle, which is the Navy's way of saying "The rest of the day is your own," and the men disperse.

If the ship is in port where leave can be given, the order "Open gangway" is customary. This means that the men can go ashore at any time they please, within certain limits.

EAST OR WEST

Even if Christmas Day is spent on board a warship in the Mediterranean, where the warm winds from Africa blow unseasonably across Malta, and the evergreens at the masthead look incongruous in the sunshine—or on a frigate patrolling the inhospitable Korean coast, where seasonable delicacies are difficult to obtain and evergreens not at all—the day is celebrated in the traditional way.

Norwegian whaling crews now in the Antarctic will also be "all

Continued on page 2

A COOK FOR 6s. A WEEK

Some interesting sidelights on early seaside holidays are revealed in the shorthand diary of an 18th-century country parson, Revd. Joseph Price, lately transcribed by Mr. Frank Higgenbottom, the Canterbury City Librarian.

The parson stayed at Margate and records the facts that sheets for beds had to be hired at 2s. 6d. a pair, and mattresses at 1s. each. A cook could be hired for 6s. a week.

The diary, written in a shorthand similar to that used by Samuel Pepys, may in due course be published.

BOOKS FOR SNAKES

The Bureau of Standards in South Africa was in urgent need of certain technical books, and after extensive inquiries found that they were in Budapest Museum, but were not for sale.

Then it transpired that the museum was short of certain South African snakes, and it was eventually agreed that if the bureau supplied the reptiles, the museum would send on the books.

So two yellow cobras, two ringed adders, and two tree snakes were sent from the Port Elizabeth Snake Museum; while the books travelled in the opposite direction.

CARELESS LAD!

From Witham, Essex, comes a story which must amuse all school-children.

A 65-year-old labourer was working at a school when the police paid a visit to inspect the children's bicycles. When the workman collected his bicycle at the end of the day he found a note tied to it, pointing out its defects and asking him to tell father!

It would be nice to think that Dad was still alive to rebuke his careless lad, and to remind him that when he was young he always kept his penny-farthing bicycle in roadworthy condition.

ON OTHER PAGES

THOMAS SHERATON OF FURNITURE FAME	4
IN THE AIR	4
A HAPPY CHRISTMAS—THANKS TO THE G.P.O.	5
CHANGING FACE OF ARABIA	7
FREDERICK SELOUS	8
THE SILVER GENTLEMAN AGAIN	9

CONFUSION IN PERSIA

By the CN Diplomatic Correspondent

IF British and American statesmen were asked to name the most confused country today it is almost certain that all would name Persia; certainly the present policy of the Persians in regard to their oil industry is unfathomable.

Persia is a country, where the most important industry—the production, refining, and export of oil—has come almost to a standstill, and where ruffians armed with clubs terrorise critics of the Government.

In the Parliament buildings the Prime Minister weeps as he makes his speeches, and M.P.s refuse to go home in case they are waylaid by the terrorists.

So unbending was the attitude they adopted that six months ago Britain gave up negotiating with the Persians about the oil problem.

What should have been a matter of a businesslike arrangement ended in exasperation for everybody. Even the Americans, who had done their best to help the Persians reach a good settlement, came to regard the affair as nearly hopeless.

EXPULSED FROM ABADAN

The British staff at Abadan who made their oil industry prosperous, have been expelled by the Persians. "From now on we run this business," they declared.

With the New Year at hand, the Persian Government is preparing for a General Election, and further plans have been suggested—chiefly in Washington—by which the trouble over oil could be solved.

The chances are, however, that the general unrest, the rioting and party strife which mark the closing days of 1951 in Persia will continue for some time yet.

It is only now dawning on this backward Middle Eastern people that they cannot do what the British skilled technicians did.

With the refineries almost at a standstill, and thousands of Persian workpeople hungry as a result, anger, bewilderment, and resentment are creeping over the nation, and there is a general lookout for a scapegoat.

So far the national leaders have succeeded in keeping the blame away from themselves. They have fostered the idea that Persia, freed from foreign influence, is at last learning to stand on her own feet.

The leaders say that if there is suffering in Persia, it is all due to foreigners. They angrily wave

aside any recognition of the technical skill, the money and missions, the engineering and building which Britain especially has put into Persia during the last 25 years.

The thousands of Persians who worked under British guidance, so welcome to them only a year or so ago, are at last beginning to realise how much they have lost.

Nevertheless, the fervour of the national leaders, even though they quarrel among themselves, has so far swept aside the doubts.

What sort of men are these leaders? Dr. Mossadeq was the Prime Minister who first barred the door to Britain. He was swept into power when his predecessor, General Razmara, met a violent end. For months at a time Dr. Mossadeq has lived in dread of a similar fate.

All the chief politicians employ bodyguards, who also act as cheerleaders on public occasions. Audiences who fail to cheer heartily enough are penalised.

Another dominant figure is Abolghassem Kashani, the head of the Persian religious system. Abolghassem, however, is far from being religious in the sense we understand it. "That fierce little Mullah," they call him in Persia.

Then there is M. Makki, Secretary-General and leading spirit of the National Front Party, which will be fighting to retain power in the elections.

COMMUNIST MENACE

M. Makki is one of those chiefly responsible for this year's anti-British measures; yet strangely enough—and this adds to the present confusion—the other leaders do not seem to want a complete break with the West.

The more far-seeing of them realise that if Persia turns her back entirely on her old helpers, the Communists will overrun their country.

So the Persian nationalists are hoping that the Atlantic nations will need their oil so much that it will eventually be bought on any terms Persia cares to fix.

But will the Persians realise the ruin rapidly overtaking her in time for the West to be of any help?

SAILORS MAKE MERRY

Continued from page 1

dressed up" at Christmas, though in a different way.

Following an old custom, the Norwegians, who comprise half the British whaling fleet, will have a bath and then don their Sunday clothes, though their ships may be a thousand miles inside the ice pack.

English whalers will celebrate with the traditional Christmas dinner. Scots, of course, will join in the festivities, but will also celebrate the New Year.

The big event on the whaling grounds will be the sending home of two-page cablegrams. This is a concession paid for by the whaling

company. As for all exiles at Christmas, news from home is a big event, and in answer to the cables the men's families can send two pages of home news—and the company pays!

At the shore station of Leith Harbour, on the island of South Georgia, there will be a film show, but the great attraction will be a football match played on a glacier top.

The usual spectators will probably be present—penguins, seals, and sea elephants which seem to wonder at the strange behaviour of human beings who wear coloured shirts and shorts to chase a ball in the Antarctic cold.

New atomic pile for Britain

There are now three atomic piles working in Britain—one at Harwell, and two newer ones at Capenhurst, Cheshire.

At Harwell isotopes are manufactured for medical purposes, and the heat generated is used for central heating. At Capenhurst the heat is to be distributed on a much larger scale of central heating.

Now a new pile, larger and hotter than any previous one, is to be established at Capenhurst; the design is already being worked out in the laboratories of a Midland firm. It will be a source of heat for power stations which can drive either steam or gas turbines.

When the new pile is built it will provide the power for the industrial North-West at a cost of less than a farthing an hour. But because of the vast capital sum needed to start it the cost for the first few years would be much more.

This peaceful application of atomic energy would place Britain at least two years ahead of the rest of the world.

Knees bend



A small skater finds it fun to glide through the arch formed by her tall friend.

FREE LECTURES AT THE MUSEUM

Free holiday lectures for children aged 10 to 16 are to be given at the Natural History Museum, South Kensington.

On December 28 and January 4 Dr. W. E. Swinton talks on Dinosaurs in Britain; on December 31 and January 7 Dr. G. F. Claringbull tells The inside story of precious stones; on January 1 and 9 Dr. Maurice Burton lectures on Is my dog clever? Mr. G. E. J. Nixon talks on January 2 and 10 on A sting in its tail; and Dr. G. O. Evans on January 3 and 11 discusses Animals with eight legs.

The lectures are all at 3 p.m., and are illustrated by films, lantern slides, models, and so on. Accommodation is limited, but seats may be reserved for either series or for a single lecture by writing to the Officer in charge of Lectures, British Museum (Natural History), Cromwell Road, London, S.W.17.

There are also to be film shows from January 14 to 26. Information can be obtained from the Museum Inquiries Staff.

News from Everywhere

STUCK UP

The employees of a flypaper company had a sticky time recently; a valve broke and 2600 gallons of glue flooded the works and flowed out into the street.

The railway museum at York is shortly to receive the Robert Stephenson engine which for 115 years, from 1832 to 1947, hauled wagons up the Swannington incline from West Bridge, Leicester, to Swannington.

A plaque and a portrait commemorating Geoffrey Whitworth, founder of the British Drama League and National Theatre, are to be placed in the town hall at Crayford, where he founded the League in 1918.

HISTORIC OAK

Evesham, Worcestershire, has just completed its Festival of Britain events with the planting of a sapling from the Boscobel Oak, which hid Charles II after the Battle of Worcester; it has been planted in the parish churchyard.

Bradford firemen are fitting a new engine to the renovated chassis of a 1938 fire-engine and are building new coachwork. The estimated saving to the city is £1500.

Some 24,000 trees are to be planted by Oakengates Urban Council on derelict pit mounds.

Of the 480 people killed in road accidents in Britain during October 92 were children, a higher figure than in any month during the past year except July (95).

THEIR GOOD DEED

Four rescues from drowning have been recognised by awards of Gilt Crosses to members of the Scout movement. They are Benny Fowle, aged eight, a Wolf Cub in the 43rd Paddington Pack; Fred Phillips, aged 11, of Hull; Senior Scout Ralph Ellis, of Broxbourne; and Fredo Carballo, of the 65th Ayrshire troop.

Canada's population is now 13,893,208—an increase of two million in ten years.

The largest prefabricated timber house ever exported from Sweden—a hospital unit with accommodation for 250 patients, operating theatre, and staff quarters—is being shipped to Poitiers, France.

Surgeons in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles watched by colour television the progress of an operation in a Los Angeles hospital. As they watched the surgeon perform the operation they discussed it with him by means of a two-way communication system.

MIGRANT SARDINES

In an effort to solve a migration mystery scientists in Morocco have released 3000 sardines, tagged with yellow identification discs.

A recent edition of the New York Herald-Tribune weighed 50 ounces. The average English newspaper weighs between two and three ounces.

A party of American and French explorers have travelled through mountainous country and dense jungle and have reached the headwaters of the Orinoco river in Venezuela. It is thought that they are the first men to reach there since Sir Walter Raleigh.

MOVING DAY

During a great storm in Northern California recently the house of the British Consul slid 100 feet down a hillside and ended up a complete wreck. The inhabitants had been warned of the danger and had already left the house.

Ealing is the third borough in England in which more than 1000 young cyclists have passed the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents Cycling Proficiency Test. The other two are Leeds and Crewe.

Viscount Nuffield has given £11,000 for research, teaching, and lecture purposes to the Faculty of Anaesthetics of the Royal College of Surgeons.


COBBLER ON WHEELS

A Manchester man has converted an old bus into a travelling boot-repairing shop. He calls for repairs and delivers the finished work the same day.

Epstein's statue of Lazarus which was exhibited in the Festival Exhibition of sculpture at Battersea Park, is to be placed in the chapel of New College, Oxford.

Fourteen-year-old G. Bailey beat his father into second place in a heavy tractor ploughing match at Histon, Cambridgeshire.

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The Children's Newspaper, December 29, 1951

NEW TRADES AND BETTER TIMES

An exhibition recently held in Gateshead has demonstrated the tremendous changes that have taken place in the industrial life of north-east England during the past few years.

For generations the area of Durham, Northumberland, and North Yorkshire was almost entirely dependent on a few heavy industries, with consequent unemployment in times of trade depression. Now there are 300 small factories operating as trading estates, employing 44,000 people and covering a wide variety of manufactured goods.

MIGRANT BIRDS

Boys of Bootham School, York, have been seeking evidence of the migratory habits of starlings by ringing some of the birds that have rested during the last few weeks in a plantation at Stillingfleet prior to their flights to the Continent. The rings bear a request asking the finder to return them to the British Museum, and some have already been sent back from Germany, Sweden, Finland, and Russia.

NAVAL BATTLE ON ICE

Robinson Crusoe on Ice, now to be seen at the Wembley Empire Pool, is a spectacular show. It includes a sea battle between pirate and British ships, and a parade of the famous admirals of history.

Priceless naval tapestries which provide a background have been borrowed from the Maritime Museum, Greenwich, and the costumes have cost about £60,000.

PAPIER DE REBUT

So great is the shortage of paper in France that students in Paris are helping in a daily collection of waste.

Some students are taken by bus to outlying districts; others who collect in the centre of the city are provided with box tricycles. In this way from 1½ to 2 tons of waste-paper a day is being collected.

GALLANT YOUNG COASTGUARDS

Isle of Wight Rovers acting as auxiliary coastguards have been awarded the Scout Medal for Meritorious Conduct for rescuing 12 people trapped on Culver Cliff in the past two years.

Last year they rescued six Army cadets who were in difficulties on this perilous cliff, and at various times this year they saved six other young people.

These dauntless cliff climbers belong to the 1st Sandown Rover Crew, four of whom have already individually won the Scout Silver Cross for gallantry on the cliffs. But their new medal will be a proud possession, for the only other group to receive it are the Shere and Peaslake Scouts, after successfully moving their camp under threat of a heath fire and exploding ammunition.

LITTLE LONDONERS HEALTHIER

A baby boy born in London now can be expected to live to 66, and a baby girl to 71. Fifty years ago a little Londoner's expectation of life was only 44 for a boy and not quite 48 for a girl. These are among the encouraging facts given in the latest L.C.C. health report.

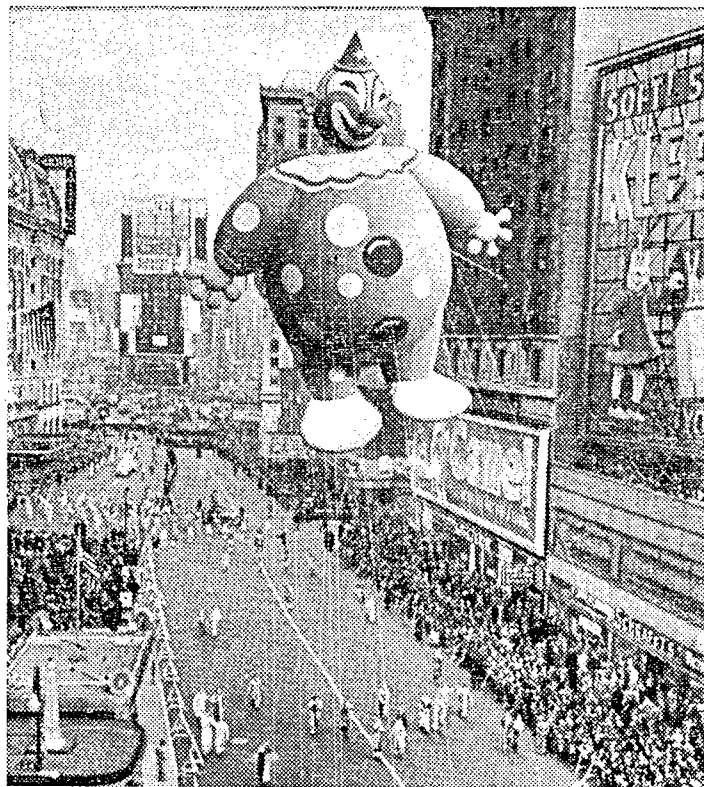
In London schools 409,120 medical inspections were carried out during 1950, and only 17.6 per cent of the children examined required further advice and treatment.

IN THE LAND OF PROSPERITY

The following facts about life in the United States are given in the "America 1951" exhibition touring the provinces.

Some 27 million families (76 per cent of the total) possess refrigerators, 25 million have washing machines, 12 million have television sets, 35 million have automobiles, and 38 million have telephones in their homes.

The last figure represents one half of the world's total of telephones.



Clowning over Broadway

This mammoth helium-filled clown floated along New York's Broadway in a parade. It was one of five airborne figures.

HOW ANIMALS MOVE

This season's Christmas lectures for young people at the Royal Institution are being given by James Gray, C.B.E., who is Professor of Zoology at Cambridge University.

The professor will talk on How Animals Move, and among the astonishing facts that his audience will learn is that every time a dog takes a step nearly 100 muscles come to play, and that an animal's body, as a propulsive mechanism, is infinitely more complex than any aeroplane or racing car.

Altogether there will be six lectures, and they will be given at 3 p.m. on December 27 and 29, and January 1, 3, 5, and 8. The subscription is £1 for boys and girls aged 10-17, and £2 for adult non-members of the Royal Institution.

WORDS AND MUSIC

For nursery folk who enjoy the Listen With Mother broadcasts there is now a series of a dozen Golden Voice Record Books (4s. 6d. each), edited by Jean Sutcliffe, who directs the BBC programmes.

Every one of these gaily-coloured books contains a gramophone record with familiar voices talking and singing of such familiar friends as Cinderella, Henny-Penny, Baby Bunting, and Margery Daw.

HISTORIC PENRITH

Penrith beacon, on which fires were once lighted to give warning of border raids, is one of the symbols on this Cumberland town's new coat-of-arms.

The design, drawn up by the Garter Principal King of Arms, also includes an ancient crown, referring to the royal charter of 1223, the cross of St. Andrew, the patron saint of the parish church, and symbols of the castle and local agricultural industry.

ROMAN FIND IN LONDON

A red and black tessellated Roman pavement, divided by a wall and thought to be two rooms of a villa, has been uncovered by archaeologists on the bombed site of Lloyd's in Lime Street, in the City of London.

The whole pavement is to be "lifted" and reset in the new Lloyd's building now in course of erection.

Roman pottery, coins, and wine jars have also been found on the site, which is in the part of the City where the Roman Basilica stood, more than 1800 years ago.

Lloyd's already has a small collection of London relics. It was on its Leadenhall Street site that the skull, now known as the Lady of Lloyd's, was found in 1925, together with the bones of a mammoth and a woolly rhinoceros.

THOSE WERE THE DAYS!

The Leicester Christmas Free Dinner Fund this year celebrated its 50th anniversary with a meal of roast turkey, plum pudding, and mince pies to more than 500 of the city's poorer citizens.

At the first dinner, 500 people each received a new roasting tin containing 3 lbs. of best English beef and 5 lbs. of potatoes. With prime beef at 6d. a lb. and potatoes at 5s. a ton the cost worked out at 2s. a head. That was 50 years ago!

SAVING CAN BE FUN...

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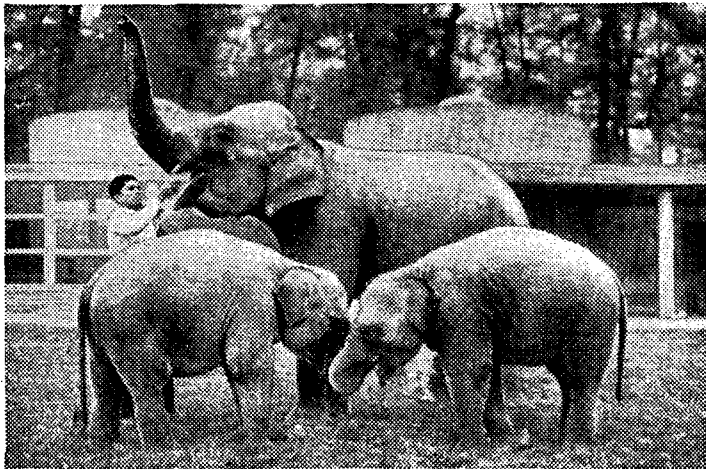
ME TOO?

Of course! Every boy or girl who saves 5/- a month or more can join.



Presents from fishbones

Jane Gee, aged 10, of Merton Park, Surrey, does not hold with wasting anything—not even fishbones. For weeks past she has been saving these from being thrown into the waste bin. After cleaning and drying them she garnishes them with glue and sealing wax and shapes them into ornaments for her friends to wear at Christmas parties.



A little trunk-to-trunk talk

When Sita, a new riding elephant from Ceylon, arrived at Whipsnade Zoo with her baby Malini, they quickly made friends with another two-year-old elephant, Valli, who also came originally from Ceylon.

THOMAS SHERATON OF FURNITURE FAME

Two hundred years ago, on December 26, 1751, Thomas Sheraton was born at Stockton-on-Tees. Son of a humble working man, he received no regular education; but he was destined to become a furniture designer of great skill, and to have his name linked with those of such famous craftsmen as Chippendale and Hepplewhite.

Sheraton, it is believed, worked as a journeyman cabinet-maker before coming to London and settling in a dingy street in Soho about 1790.

In these depressing surroundings

he drew and published a series of manuals of furniture designs, winning special fame by *The Cabinet-Makers and Upholsterers Drawing Book*.

He did not himself manufacture the articles he designed, but all the leading cabinet-makers of the day bought his manuals and followed his instructions when making furniture for their customers.

Sheraton simplified the ideas of his predecessors by doing away with meaningless ornamentation. Instead, he introduced fine proportions and delicate curves. He recommended the use of satinwood for much of his furniture and this was very often inlaid with different-coloured woods, or painted with attractive designs.

HARLEQUIN CRAZE

Fashionable people in those days loved pieces of "harlequin" or combination furniture, and the great designer devised many pieces to satisfy this craze. And so we find among his designs a library table the top of which lifts up and exposes a stepladder, and a dressing-table that will convert into a washstand. Even more astonishing was a couch with "heating urns" beneath, "that the seat may be kept in a proper temperature in cold weather."

The great designer was also fascinated by astronomy and geometry. He often dealt with these subjects in his manuals, though they served no useful purpose there; and he kept a stationery shop and taught drawing and perspective. But in spite of all these activities he died in great poverty in November 1806.

Sheraton was the last of the great designers of his era, for with the turn of the century nothing of an artistic nature was produced—the decline had set in.

LIBRARIES

Some 314,100,000 books were borrowed from 583 public library systems in Great Britain and Northern Ireland during the year 1950-51.

Expenditure on books was £2,305,500, equal to 11d. for every man, woman, and child in the U.K. The total expenditure on libraries was £9,130,000, equal to 3s. 7½d. each.

In the Air

By the C N Flying Correspondent

Baby Jet

BRITAIN'S first jet lightplane is a converted Miles Sparrowhawk with its piston engine removed and a baby jet engine fitted beneath the cockpit.

The Sparrowhawk, a pre-war sportsplane, has a span of just over 28 feet. It will be the first British aircraft powered by the unique Turbomeca jet unit, which is made in France.

Mammoth Hoverplanes

A HYPOTHETICAL family of giant helicopters has already been envisaged by Mr. O. L. Fitzwilliams, of Westland Aircraft, one of Britain's foremost helicopter designers. The new machines will be powered by jet engines mounted at the tips of the rotor blades.

The smallest member of the projected family will weigh 25 tons.

Next in the line comes the "medium Giant" with Sapphires at the tips of each of the three rotor blades, and capable of lifting a load of 54 tons for a flight of one hour. The rotor diameter will be about 200 feet.

Huge doors and a ramp in the nose will allow wheeled vehicles to be driven straight into the fuselage, while passengers will enter by a door beneath the stern. The military loads of the "medium" version will include either 450 troops or a 50-ton Centurion tank—which will fly suspended below the fuselage.

The "Queen Mary" of these enormous helicopters will weigh 410,000 lbs. and have a rotor sweep of 284 feet.

South Sea Air Cruises

CRUISES to the enchanting islands of the South Pacific are to be introduced by Trans-Oceanic Airways, with the largest private-owned flying-boat fleet in Australasia.

Waters of such beautiful harbours as those at Fiji, Samoa, and Tahiti provide natural landing-strips for flying-boats. Land-planes cannot visit many of the islands owing to the lack of airfields. Luxurious Short Hythes—developed from the Sunderland—will carry tourists on these romantic flights.

Double Triangle

AT the Gloster Aircraft Company's airfield at Moreton Valence, Britain's most advanced jet fighter recently took the air.

The machine, the Gloster G.A.5, scores two "firsts" in aviation; it is the prototype of the first operational delta-wing aircraft in the world, and is also the first of this type to be fitted with twin jets.

Bristling with the latest armament and radar aids, the G.A.5 can seek out its quarry "blind." Two Sapphire jets give it a rocket-like rate of climb that probably exceeds 10,000 feet a minute.

Spotters can identify this successor to the Meteor by its triangular mainplane and the enormous fin surmounted by a delta tail-plane. It is, in fact, a "double triangle."

CHRISTMAS DOWN UNDER

If you lived in Australia, you might enjoy your Christmas dinner as a midsummer picnic on the beach, or perhaps in the bush.

People of Broken Hill, a New South Wales town in the middle of semi-desert, like to have picnics in a dried-up river bed called Yan-cowinna Creek.

First comes a bumpy journey in a closed bus, for the red dust blows everywhere. Sometimes the driver stops to roll rocks out of the way; sometimes the bus sways as if it must overturn.

The creek is about four feet deep here, and the bed is sandy and flat, and quite dry at this season. A few gum trees on the banks provide welcome shade, for the temperature is over 90 degrees.

Dry gum twigs and bark are soon collected, and a fire is lit. Meanwhile, food is unpacked—bread, butter, tea, and chops, for this is a Christmas "chop picnic."

The billy of water is put on to boil; the chops are placed between the wire mesh of a picnic grill and held near the glowing fire.

Maybe the tea is a bit smoky, but it is Australian billy tea, and that is the best in the world!

Possibly the meat is somewhat overdone, but there is as much as anyone can eat.

There is no washing-up to be done (you hold the chops in your fingers), so after the meal and a rest you explore. And it is as well to keep within sight of the bus or some fellow picnickers, for people who wander alone in these wastes may be hard to find.

All is very quiet. Above, the sky is a vivid, cloudless blue; on all sides is a vast expanse of salt-bush, red earth, and sparse grass.

No rain may have fallen for over a year, so you will see no water. But, by what was once a water-hole, there are thousands of little dried footprints, mainly rabbit tracks, with signs of an occasional kangaroo.

Well before sunset the bus starts the homeward journey, for darkness comes quickly, and it is no joke to be out in bush country after dark.

The driver switches on the radio as you jog along the track, and to round off that Christmas picnic you may listen to such carols as *In the Bleak Mid-winter* and *See Amid the Winter Snow*.

ZOO ANIMALS LOSE A FRIEND

A man who, since the war, has nursed more sick Zoo animals back to health than anyone, has just left the menagerie for Chatham Dockyard. He is Mr. Richard Skerton, deputy headkeeper at the Zoo sanatorium, now returning to the Royal Navy.

During the war "Dick" Skerton (as he is generally known) was a sub-lieutenant in the senior service, and won the Distinguished Service Cross in the D-Day operations.

On demobilisation he rejoined the Zoo staff (before the war he had worked for a short spell as junior keeper in the reptile house), and, having achieved some distinction in the healing of ailing

animals, was put in charge of the sanatorium.

He has since saved the lives of numerous Zoo animals entrusted to his care, and has reared "on the bottle" a weird variety of baby mammals from antelopes to otters.

One of Dick Skerton's most striking successes was in 1949, when he managed to rear a baby wallaby in an artificial pouch consisting of an electric blanket rigged up to resemble its mother's pouch—the mother had died soon after giving birth to her baby.

Mr. Skerton's successor at the sanatorium is Mr. Alec Wilson, deputy headkeeper of the Zoo's quarantine station.

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ALL FOR

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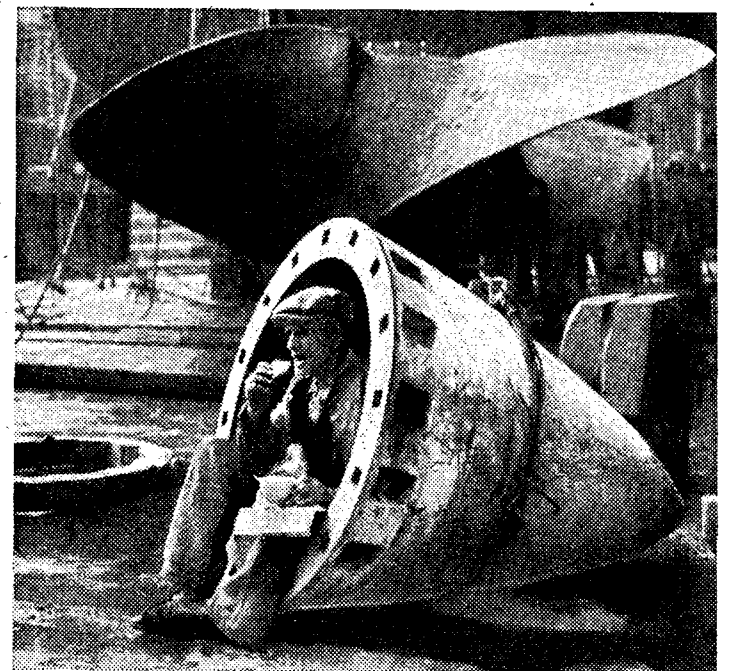
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Propeller Picnic

One of the workers in the dry dock at Southampton finds that the cone of a liner's propeller makes a comfortable seat in which to enjoy his lunch.

A Happy Christmas . . . Thanks to the Post Office



Where there's a will . . .

OUR good friend the postman is a romantic figure at Christmas-time, and his knock brings young people dashing excitedly to their front doors.

There is fun in working hard to give pleasure to others, and that is perhaps why these Post Office folk look so cheerful, although Yuletide is for them the busiest time of the year, when the spirit of good will brings upon them an avalanche of parcels, letters, cards.

The regular workers, helped by some 110,000 temporary volunteers, have to deal with approximately 560 million letters which pop into pillar-boxes in Britain during the ten days' Christmas period. This is 56 million a day, compared with the normal 20 million.

It would be stiff work if all letters and parcels were properly addressed, but thousands turn up

with no address on them at all.

Another problem is the badly-packed parcel, which must obviously disintegrate unless it receives first-aid. About 43,000 parcels had to be re-packed and re-tied last Christmas at the Mount Pleasant depot in London.

THE biggest worry, however, for these devoted distributors of friendship tokens, is the loose articles that escape from crazily-packed parcels, several hundreds at Mount Pleasant alone. To find a toy or book all by itself on the post office floor touches the hearts of the Santa Claus army, who try to find to which parcel it belongs.

This may be impossible, in which case the stray gift is kept until it is claimed, and if its sender never seeks it, it is sold by auction—sad fate for a Christmas present.



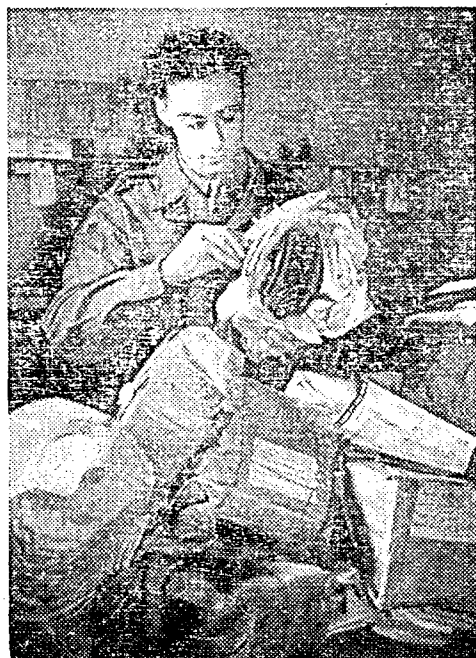
A special department of the G.P.O. in London deals with letters addressed to Santa Claus



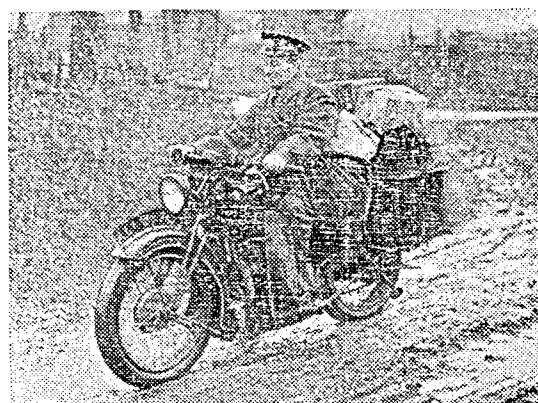
Boys and girls, temporary helpers in the Christmas rush, set out on their delivery rounds



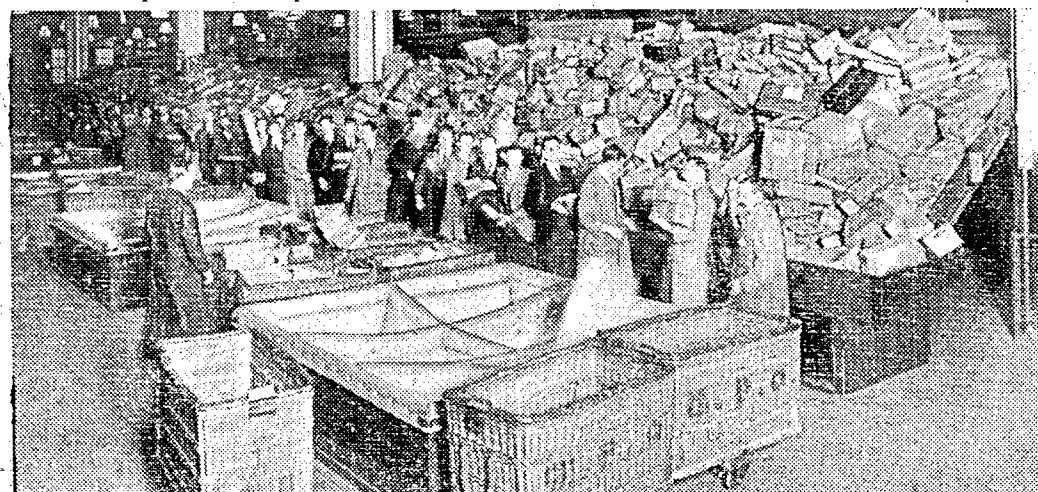
Among the 110,000 extra workers in the Post Office are students who help with the sorting



The Army Post Office has helped to deal with parcels for troops overseas



A motor-cycling postman with a big load of Christmas mail



The great avalanche of parcels pours into the sorting office at Mount Pleasant



This is the way Christmas greetings ought to arrive!

Children's Newspaper

John Carpenter House
Whitefriars · London · EC4
DECEMBER 29 1951

MESSAGE OF CHRISTMAS

ONCE again the old wish of Happy Christmas is echoing round the world. Expressed in every language under the sun, the Christmas message is universal because it speaks simply and directly to everyone. It means good will, good neighbourhood, friendship, and love—the basic requirements for a peaceful, happy world.

Christmas always brings with it a reminder that a peaceful world is possible, even though there are so many forces working against it. We should have this world of our dreams if only the spirit of Christmas were allowed to reign everywhere. That is simple truth.

For nearly two thousand years the Christmas message of Peace on Earth and Good Will to all Mankind has been proclaimed; but never has the world had greater need to heed it than today. Christmas has not failed, only Man's understanding of it. So let the bells ring out once more, and announce the holy time of happiness and hope.

*God from on High hath heard;
Let sighs and sorrows cease;
The skies unfold, and lo—
Descends the gift of peace.*

JUST AN IDEA

As Charles Lamb wrote:
Presents endear Absents.

Under the Editor's Table

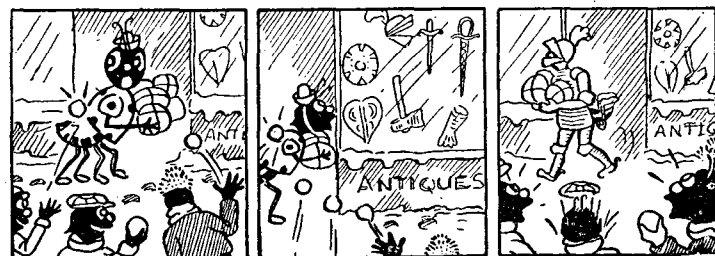
An absent-minded person does not see a thing even when it is right under his nose. His mouth, for instance.

The modern child is taught to make things. Not faces.

A boy of 12 saved enough money to buy himself a bicycle. Ought to get on.

Everybody likes a tuck in at Christmas. And some need to let a tuck out.

BILLY BEETLE



The Editor's Table

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS CARD



WHO first thought of sending Christmas greeting cards?

It has long been thought that the honour belongs to Sir Henry Cole, a prominent member of the Society of Arts. As recorded in the C.N. four years ago, Sir Henry Cole in 1846 commissioned John Calcott Horsley to design a Christmas card, which he sent to more than a thousand friends.

Further researches into the subject, however, reveal an earlier Christmas card, the original of

which is preserved in the British Museum, and is reproduced here by courtesy of the Trustees.

This was designed and etched in 1842 by William Maw Egley, a son of William Egley, a well-known Victorian miniature portrait painter who was a frequent exhibitor at the Royal Academy.

Young William was only 16 at the time, but his card reveals a mastery of etching, as well as a nice appreciation of seasonable festivities.

YULETIDE 200 YEARS AGO

FROM Christmas Day till after Twelfth-Day, is a Time of Christian Rejoicing; a Mixture of Devotion and Pleasure: They wish one another Happiness; they give Treats, and make it their whole Business to drive away Melancholy. Whereas little Presents from one another are made only the first Day of the Year in France, they begin here at Christmas; and they are not so much Presents from Friend to Friend, or from Equal to Equal (which is less practised in England now than formerly) as

from Superior to Inferior. Every Family against Christmas makes a famous Pie, which they call Christmas Pie: It is a great Nostrum, the Composition of this Pasty; it is a most learned Mixture of Neats-tongues, Chicken, Eggs, Sugar, Raisins, Lemon and Orange Peel, various Kinds of Spicery, etc. They also make a Sort of Soup with Plums, which is not at all inferior to the Pie, which is in their Language called Plum-porridge.

Henri Misson, in Travels over England, published in 1719

Every boy's problem at this season

THIS Christmas I hardly know how I am going to get enough money to buy presents for everybody. I estimate that I shall need at least 1s. 6d., but I shall only be able to save 1s. I would never dream of spending 4d. per person.

Only if my aunty sends, as she sometimes does, a bit of money to spend on presents as a Christmas box, it is the only way out.

From an 11-year-old boy's essay, quoted in Parliament

Home for the holidays

AND I do come home at Christmas. We all do, or we all should. We all come home, or ought to come home, for a short holiday—the longer the better—from the great boarding-school where we are for ever working at our arithmetical slates, to take and give a rest.

Charles Dickens

What Glory they did find!

OWONDROUS night,
When shone the light
Forth from a guiding star,
That led wise men
To journey on
And follow from afar.
The glowing sky
Was filled with song,
Sung by an angel choir,
Good will towards men,
Of peace on earth,
Some shepherds to inspire.
And when they reached
A manger's side
What glory they did find!
The Son of God,
The King of Kings,
The Saviour of Mankind!
The world's true Light
Was born that night
And far outshone the star.

T. B. Gleave

HOLY HOUR

BEFORE the paling of the stars,
Before the winter morn,
Before the earliest cockcrow
Jesus Christ was born:
Born in a stable,
Cradled in a manger,
In the world His hands had made,
Born a stranger.

Christina Rossetti

Thank you, kindly

GLADLY, the boy, with Christmas Box in hand,
Throughout the town his devious route pursues;
And, of his master's customers, implores
The yearly mite: often his cash he shakes;
The which, perchance, of coppers few consists,
Whose dulcet jingle fills his little soul
With joy. *An old Christmas ditty*

PEACE ON EARTH

I HEARD the bells on Christmas Day
Their old, familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet
The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

H. W. Longfellow

THINGS SAID

PRINCE CHARLES has a will of his own, an inquiring mind, and a clear blue eye capable of an unwinking stare—these augur well for the future of this country under the rule of Charles III.

Mr. Philip Mitchiner, vice-president, Royal College of Surgeons

WISDOM is in the shortest supply of any commodity of our time—not excluding good red meat.

Colm Brogan, journalist

THE British have formed the habit of praising their institutions, which are sometimes inept, and ignoring the character of their race, which is often superb.

Lord Radcliffe

IT is about time people gave up using the word "colonisation" as being synonymous with the exploitation of peoples.

Mr. Percy Spender, Australian Ambassador to the U.S.

MAN has a right to peace, and a peaceful environment alone can help him develop to his full moral and spiritual stature.

Indian Minister of Health

IN THE COUNTRY

OFTEN unnoticed amid the full leafage of the woods in summer, the holly tree becomes one of the most attractive sights in the countryside at Yuletide, "glowing with native coral bright."

Some hollies never bear fruit, carrying only male blossoms in springtime, and are comparatively dull and unattractive. But the holly tree that is decorated with clusters of shining crimson berries, contrasting vividly with the glossy dark-green foliage, commands our attention.

From time immemorial it has been the custom to decorate churches and houses at Christmas with wreaths and bunches of holly and other evergreens. An ancient name for it was "holy" tree; it was at one time believed to be the original "burning bush" referred to in the Scriptures. The crimson berries were symbols of the blood shed for us by Our Saviour on the Cross, and the prickly leaves were the Crown of Thorns.



OUR HOMELAND

Christmas trees near Helvellyn, Cumberland

The Children's Newspaper, December 29, 1951

THE CHANGING FACE OF ARABIA

DOWN the centuries the Arabs led a nomadic existence, and we have pictured them roaming the vast Arabian deserts from one oasis to another in search of water for their camels and horses. Today the whole face of the country is changing and, under the guidance of King Ibn Saud, a new economic life is springing up. A CN correspondent who recently visited Saudi Arabia and called on its king describes this modern miracle.

Much of the development is of comparatively modern growth. True, the rise of the Wahabi movement for reforming Islam dates back to the 18th century, but the reformers did not succeed in putting Arabia on a more stable economic basis. The old rivalries between the heads of states were still strong.

The Turks, too, who had extended their empire as far south as Yemen, had little hold over Arabia beyond a few places on the coast.



ABOVE: Modern houses built on rocky crags in Mecca's Forbidden City



LEFT: A typical Mecca merchant and his two daughters

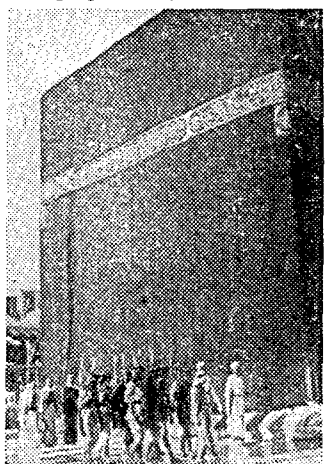
old, of commanding appearance in his flowing Arab robes, is very strict on many things. In his up-to-date palace nobody may smoke—not even the guests.

When told by our correspondent how impressed he had been by all he had seen, the king replied:

"I have done what I could for my people." It was a characteristic, modest remark. In contrast to the conditions existing less than 25 years ago most of the people of Saudi Arabia today have work.

Their shops are full of foods and other things from England and America. Few people, however, want to change their national dress for western clothes. All foreigners, indeed, are expected to wear Arab clothes. All the engineers working in the oilfields dress exactly like the Arabs.

Great things are happening in Saudi Arabia, and much more will be heard about this rapidly-developing country in the future.



Pilgrims walking round the draped Kaaba, the shrine of Mecca

During the First World War Hussein, grand sherif of Mecca, repudiated the authority of the Turks and helped the Allies to drive them northward. He set himself up as king of the Hejaz, but in 1925 was driven from his dominions by his old rival, Ibn Saud, king of Nejd and the Wahabis.

It did not take Ibn Saud long to appreciate that there was only one way to make the country progressive. He must find money to buy the food and clothes his people needed, and he must also provide funds for the irrigation of the land, to bring it back into productivity.

So he invited engineers to drill for oil. Eleven years ago they found it, in Dhahran, near the Persian Gulf. Since that day, Saudi Arabia has not looked back.

A flight from Jeddah, on the Red Sea coast, to Riyadh, the capital, is in itself a revelation of what the revenue from the sale of oil has done for the Arabs.

For nearly four hours the air journey is over sunburnt rocks and rolling dunes of desert sand; but patches of greenery show where the nomads have been settled.

Huge new dams have been built, and the water piped into channels, so that parts of the desert have been made into farms. Each year the king sends flights of aeroplanes with special gifts for all the newly-settled tribesmen.

The king, now over 70 years

Football with fans

For years past the British zest for football has penetrated to most parts of the world, and in many countries English-style football vies in popularity with other and older national pastimes.

But Japan is an exception. There they have a game of football which was played a thousand years ago.

The game has not entirely died out, and last week a semi-public exhibition took place of one of the strangest varieties of football in the world. The team was composed entirely of peers. The event, which takes place at Kyoto four times a year, is called kemari, or "kicking-ball."

The ball is slightly smaller than a modern soccer football, and is made of leather stretched on a bamboo framework and inflated to give it resilience. The players dress in ancient and traditional costumes, consisting of long, gorgeously-brocaded gowns and special silk turbans of curious shape. They carry fans and paper handkerchiefs.

All kicking is done with the instep, and tradition decrees that each player shall comport himself with ease and grace.

Kemari is an individual sport, not a team contest, and the players stand around in a wide circle and kick the ball from one to the other with the object of keeping it in the air for as long as possible. In olden times football in Japan more closely resembled the game as we know it today.

KEEPING FIT IN WINTER

9. Exercises (ii)

Last week we described the exercises to be done in the morning while you are on the bed.

Now jump out. Incline your body from your hips and, with your feet astride, roll your body rhythmically in wider and wider sweeps, keeping your hands on your hips.

Then, with both hands, grip the left ankle, then the right, straighten up, and finish the movement with the "arms bend" position. Repeat five times.

Now with the palms of your hands, keeping your legs straight, touch the floor in front of you, then, through your legs, touch the floor behind you. Finish as in the previous exercise. Make it a 1-2-3-4 movement. Down one, in front two, three back, and four up! Repeat five times.

Finally, with your legs apart, stretch your arms as high as they will go above your head. Pull on all your back muscles. Then, still pulling on these muscles and on the thighs and legs, work your outstretched arms down slowly until your hands touch the floor. The movement should take as long as possible.

Relax. Breathe deeply. Wind up with some shadow-boxing.

V. S.

Next week: Walking and Cycling

MYSTERIOUS CREATURES OF MOUNT EVEREST

It now seems certain that the Abominable Snowman of legend is a large monkey dwelling in the remote fastnesses of the Himalayas.

Mr. Eric Shipton of the Everest Reconnaissance party has sent to The Times photographs of footprints of two of these mysterious creatures in the snow, and has stated that he followed them for over a mile.

Each footprint was larger than that made by the explorers' big boots, and had three toes and a thumb. A Sherpa native with the party declared that the prints were made by a "yeti." He said he had been near one of these yetis and that it was a man-like creature about 5 feet 6 inches tall and covered with thick hair, but with a bare face.

Similar tracks have been seen by previous Mount Everest explorers, and have caused much speculation among zoologists as to whatever kind of an animal can live at such heights and in such cold. The tracks were first seen by Europeans

30 years ago and the leader of that expedition said:

"The coolies assured me that it was the track of a wild, hairy man, and that these men were occasionally to be found in the wildest and most inaccessible mountains."

Today the authorities at the Natural History Museum, London, believe that the footprints photographed by Mr. Shipton are those of a large langur monkey, a species as tall as five feet. A specimen of this kind of langur, obtained at 12,000 feet above sea level, is on view at the museum.

The natives of the Himalayas have many legends about these "abominable snowmen." They say that it means death to a human being to see one—though Mr. Shipton's Sherpa porter evidently survived the ordeal! The expression, abominable snowman, is a translation of the Tibetan words, metoh kangmi.

The world will eagerly await more news of the elusive denizen of desolate Mount Everest.

PEBBLE FLOATING IN THE SEA

A 12-year-old schoolboy, Malcolm Campbell, walking along the beach near his home in the Isle of Lewis, was surprised to see a brown pebble floating in the water.

A floating pebble was something new, so he took it to school and showed it to his teacher. It has now been identified by the Royal Scottish Museum as the seed of a plant which grows in the West Indies and Guiana.

The seed, almost two inches long, had been carried by the Gulf Stream and North Atlantic Drift from America to the Outer Hebrides.

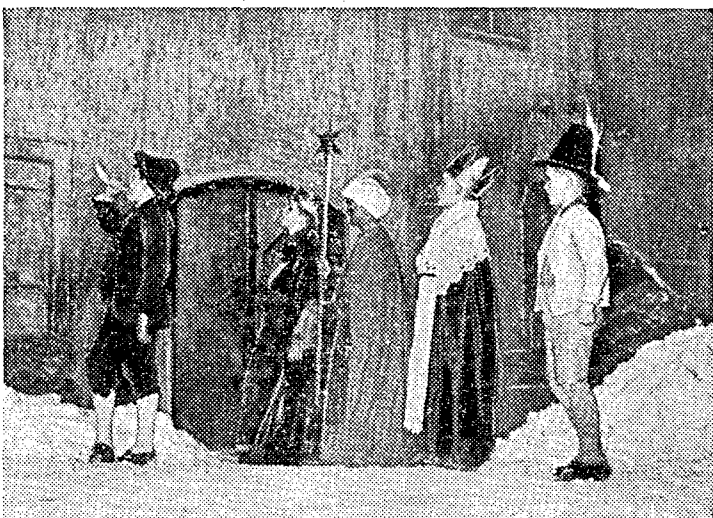
Some people find it difficult to believe in the North Atlantic Drift, because they cannot see it, but people in the Hebrides need no

convincing by the geography books. Not only does it give the Hebrides a milder winter climate than most of England (although they are in the same latitude as parts of Labrador) but flotsam from across the Atlantic is often found on the beaches.

A schoolteacher at Barvas, on the west side of Lewis, built up a collection of strange seaweeds found on the beach, and experts identified them all as American varieties which had been carried right across the Atlantic Ocean by currents.

Not long ago a tin containing some coins and a letter was found near Stornoway, the largest town in the Hebrides. It had been thrown into the sea by fishermen in the Gulf of Florida.

A STAR IN THE EAST



This photograph shows an old Christmas custom still observed in Austrian villages. In the centre are three boy carol-singers, dressed as the Three Kings who followed the star to Bethlehem. In front is

a herald with a horn calling to the people of the farmhouse, which is closely shuttered against the cold winter's night. Behind them stands an attendant in typical Austrian peasant dress.

SANTA CLAUS COLLEGE

If you receive a Christmas parcel franked Santa Claus, it will probably have come via Santa Claus, Indiana, U.S.A. The principal activity of this tiny community is the readdressing of mail from all over the world so that it bears a seasonable postmark.

The village was named jocularly over a century ago when it was found that its suggested title of Santa Fé had already been adopted elsewhere. Now it has a complete Father Christmas industry.

There is actually a Santa Claus College, which turns out craftsmen who make and demonstrate toys of any description, and who are also trained in child psychology. Successful graduates, who must also have experience of store work, are awarded the degree of B.S.C. (Bachelor of Santa Clausing).

For children who visit the village the chief attraction is the Santa Claus park, where a huge statue of Father Christmas looks down from a silver star.

There is also a museum specialising in a collection of dolls from many generations. One of its recent acquisitions is a 15-inch waxwork model of Princess Elizabeth in her wedding dress.

NEW USE FOR OLD MINES

A unique method of storing oil in underground caves and mines has been successfully tried in Sweden. The system is to flood the chamber with water up to a certain level, and on this layer of water the oil is run in. The water in the subsoil around the chamber prevents any leakage, and the oil is pumped out as required.

Storage chambers can be specially blasted or disused mines brought into use. Special rock chambers are used for petrol storage, and the method employed ensures that no air enters.

An experimental plant started in an old felspar mine on the east coast of Sweden cost only £241,000—about one-sixth of the estimated cost of an underground steel storage plant with a similar capacity.

In his early life William Booth knew both poverty and squalor. His parents were very poor, and he himself was a pawnbroker's assistant in a Nottingham slum.



Pioneers 66, William Booth, the Salvation Army founder

The sight of ragged children begging in the streets deeply affected Booth. He resolved to help the down-trodden, the friendless, and all who had lost faith in life.



Eventually Booth founded a Christian Mission in London. Some years later in a talk with his son, he described its members as a "salvation army".

It was an inspiration, and he gave this name to the mission. Military uniforms and titles followed, and today the Salvation Army has missions all over the world.



FREDERICK SELOUS — GALLANT GENTLEMAN

Frederick Courteney Selous, who was born in London on December 31 just a century ago, was a remarkable man in many ways; but his claim to fame rests on the part he played in founding Rhodesia.

As a schoolboy he was distinguished chiefly for his proficiency in games, his inborn spirit of adventure, and his love of natural history.

When he left school he was intended for a medical career, but he yearned for the open-air life of a sportsman, and before he was 20 he was out in South Africa hunting on his own account, well able to take care of himself. His hunting of elephants and lions was always on a big scale, though he never killed for killing's sake. Elephants

he killed, of course, as a business—92 of them in one trip.

As a hunter and ivory-trader Fred Selous got to know South Africa almost as well as he knew his own country. His relations with the natives were of the happiest, and his services as guide to hunting and prospecting parties into the interior were always in demand, for he was a man of great charm as well as great courage.

FRIEND OF CECIL RHODES

His explorations and discoveries, subsequently published by the Royal Geographical Society, were in 1892 recognised by the award of the Society's Founder's gold medal.

It was about this time that he succeeded in interesting Cecil Rhodes in Matabeleland and Mashonaland, then threatened with annexation by the Portuguese. When the concession of mineral rights was involved, Selous acted as go-between for Rhodes and Lobengula, the Matabele chief, and in 1892 he had the satisfaction of seeing the colony of Rhodesia secured for the British Crown.

After helping to quell the Matabele revolts in 1893 and 1895, Selous returned to England. At home he spent most of his time in writing, but he went on occasional sporting trips in the company of such doughty big-game hunters as Theodore Roosevelt.

By the time he was 60 Fred

Selous was still an occasional hunter, but had begun to settle down as writer and lecturer. Then came the First World War.

He offered his services for German East Africa, the region he knew best, and they were accepted. In the spring of 1915 he left England for duty in German East Africa with a commission in the Royal Fusiliers. The following year he received his captaincy and gained the D.S.O. He was killed in action at the head of his company, near Kissaka, in January 1917.

Fred Selous died as he would have wished—in action. He was the original of Rider Haggard's hero, Allan Quatermain, a gentleman in all he did, with a heart as clean as it was bold.

GLASS FIBRE BY THE MILE

Glass fibre, drawn out so fine that it is less than one-tenth the thickness of human hair and with enough glass in a single marble to produce 100 miles of thread, is now used for textiles and similar products.

The very latest glass fibre, however, is so fine that one pound of it stretched out in a single strand would circle the Earth 400 times. The strand would be over ten million miles long. It is being produced for the United States Navy.

FREE HOLIDAY FILMS

Three mornings of their holidays will be booked for some young Londoners who are interested in history and art. These will be the mornings of January 3, 8, and 10, when free film shows for boys and girls are to be given at 11.30 at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

On January 3 the film will be about the Medieval Castle and the Medieval Village; on January 8 the film deals with Paradise Lost—the painting by Jerome Bosch in the Prado at Madrid—and also the St. Ursula Legend, the series of paintings by Vittore Carpaccio in Venice.

On January 10 the film is about Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts and Tapestry-making at Aubusson.

The films are to be shown in the lecture theatre of the museum, and each will be introduced and commented on by Mrs. Renée Marcousé of the Ministry of Education.

Boys and girls of all ages will be welcome, but the films will not be suitable for those under 12. Adults may attend if they wish.

MAIL BAG SCHOOL

Tens of thousands of children throughout Australia and New Zealand have lost a friend. Miss Warren Thomas, editor of the Church of England General Board of Religious Education Publications has passed on.

Miss Thomas had planned to be a missionary in China, but was sent to work in Australia in 1923. In 1924 her wide friendship began when she started posting Sunday-school lessons to five children living too far away to go to church. This was the beginning of the Church of England Mail Bag School, which now has 25,000 children enrolled.

In 1931, when an earthquake destroyed churches in New Zealand, lessons were sent there by the Mail Bag School. Today the Mail Bag School is used throughout seven dioceses of New Zealand.

SINDBAD THE SAILOR—PICTURE-VERSION OF THE ANCIENT STORY (3)

Sindbad was trapped in a valley where the soil consisted of diamonds and other precious stones. But the valley was also infested with huge serpents. These creatures hid by day for fear of being caught by giant birds, the rocs; but Sindbad felt sure they would come out at night and devour him. Was he doomed to die amid boundless wealth?



Sindbad found the skinned carcass of a beast, and remembered the tale of how men who dared not enter this valley obtained the gems by throwing down fresh meat to which the precious stones would stick.



Eagles would carry the meat to the cliff-top, but before they could eat it, the men would drive them away and take the gems. This gave Sindbad an idea for escaping with great riches from this dreadful place.



He filled his pockets and turban with choice diamonds, hid under the carcass and gripped it firmly. Soon an enormous eagle swooped down and, seizing the meat, flew up and alighted on the cliff-top, where the gem-hunters waited.



A crowd of men made a tremendous noise and scared the bird away. But great was their astonishment when Sindbad emerged. "Fear not," he said, "I have arrived with plenty of diamonds whereof I will give you."

Now that he is rich, will Sindbad be content to go home and stay there? See next week's instalment



The Silver Gentleman Again

by GEOFFREY TREASE

The story so far

Philip Seattalan is a prisoner at Mont Castillane, in Provence, and his sister Sarah, with her friends Martin Sherwood and the Silver Gentleman, is hurrying down the dangerous River Rhône in a boat to rescue him. Lord Lydeard is also making for Mont Castillane on horseback, to remove Philip for ever and gain control of his estates.

The bridge of Saint-Esprit

"WATCH out for the Saint-Esprit bridge—it's a terror," the friendly barge-man had shouted, but they had enough to think of, meeting the dangers of the voyage as they appeared, hour by hour and day by day, without looking ahead to others still in the distance.

They would reach Avignon, dead or alive, that was certain. The swift current would see to that. But there were many moments when Sarah's knuckles whitened as she gripped the side of the boat in sudden fear, and Martin strained grimly at his paddle in the stern to avoid some obstacle. Yes, they would get to Avignon, but whether separately, as drowned bodies, or together in the boat, was still doubtful.

Southwards they drifted, ever southwards. Past Montélimar, with its battle-scarred castle, into an ever-narrowing gorge, the cliffs and crags soaring on either side to nearly 1000 feet. More castles perched on the rocks. One, the Château de Montpensier, was a ruin. Sarah wondered if her brother were being kept in some such place, and if it would be equally hard to reach.

THE river was now like a giant mill-race, boiling along between ramparts of cliff.

"This must be the 'robinet de Donzère'!" shouted the Silver Gentleman.

"The what, sir?"

"The 'Donzère tap.' They call it that because it's so narrow—the river spurts through as if it were a tap."

"It certainly does," screamed Sarah above the tumult of the rushing waters. Her face paled under her sunburn.

But they came through safely—rather like the cork from a wine-bottle, but safely all the same. And now they were truly in Provence, and the valley broadened like a smile. Shimmery grey olive trees and sombre tufted cypresses replaced the grass fields and woodlands of the north. It was no longer cows that raised big heads to stare at their passing, but innumerable goats that ran, on

nimble clicking feet, to survey them curiously from the bank.

The worst of the journey was behind them, and they had made excellent time. However hard Lord Lydeard had ridden, and however lucky he had been with his inns and roads and changes of horses, it was unlikely that he was still ahead of them. They could do with as long a lead as they could win, for in any case there was the problem of Mont Castillane itself.

MASTER HAWTHORNE had not been able to tell them much before they left him in the monastery hospital at Grenoble. He believed that the castle, which he had never seen, was largely in ruins, but that one wing was inhabited. An old count lived there, whom Philip and his tutor had met while they were travelling in Northern Italy. What sort of a man he was, and why he had agreed to take an English boy and keep him prisoner, was more than Master Hawthorne had been able to explain in his weakened condition.

"There'll be time for explanations when we get there," Sarah had said.

"But we shall need to go warily," the Silver Gentleman had warned her. "This is a mighty strange business."

It was close to sunset when they emerged from the gorge of Donzère. Soon the sky reddened and, as they drifted along in the middle of the broad river, they could see—far beyond the low banks—the hills rising black against the west. Nobody thought of tying up for the night. They were too near Avignon. Dawn should bring them to the proud city of the Popes, and then it was only a few miles to Mont Castillane.

SARAH spread out the supper. It was good to think of her

guardian stretching his weary limbs in some wayside inn, wasting good hours in bed and at table! The three voyagers had nothing to do but eat, drink, and laze in the sun all day, and sleep through the cool freshness of the night—yet every hour the swirling river bore them miles nearer their destination.

"I'll steer for a while," offered the Silver Gentleman, dabbing his lips elegantly as he finished his wine. Despite sun and wind, and the cramped quarters of a small boat, he had never quite lost his dapper appearance. Even now his small beard was as trim as if he had come straight from the barber's hands.

Martin changed places obediently, the Silver Gentleman perching himself in the stern, paddle trailed in the green water to keep the boat on her course. The two young people stretched themselves down for sleep, covering their faces against the mosquitoes. And darkness spread slowly, like a pall of velvet, over the broad plain of Provence.

So they came, in due course, to the great bridge of Saint-Esprit. Here the river was three-quarters of a mile wide, and the current strong. Dozing in the stern, the Silver Gentleman blinked suddenly into full wakefulness as he saw the ancient structure, built by the monks three centuries before, looming even blacker than the night behind. He gasped at the very size of it. It seemed to stretch for ever to right and left, its nineteen arches like an army in column.

Then, as he heard the ugly roar of the water and drew near enough to see the white froth boiling round the piers on which those arches rested, he realised that this was the bridge the barge-man had meant. He remembered the dangers of London Bridge, where many a boat capsized when shooting the arches. And the Rhône was a more dangerous river than the Thames, even at high tide.

HE must choose which arch he was to pass through, and get the boat headed straight, so that it touched on neither side. Easier said than done! The stream had its own mysterious currents. Soon he realised that, however hard he strained at the steering paddle, he would never make the arch he had first chosen.

In desperation he changed his tactics, trying to make sure of a clean passage through the next one. He was too late. The river was like a runaway horse. The light craft bobbed and shot slantwise in the clutch of the current.

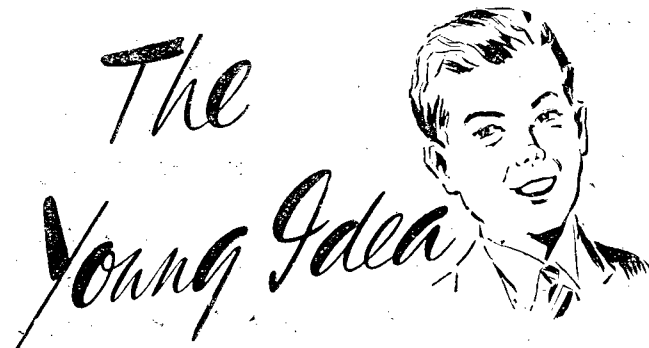
Crash! It struck the stonework of the bridge with a jar which woke the sleepers amidstships. There was a sickening lurch, a long-drawn-out grating sound—then they were clear of the bridge and still mercifully afloat.

"What on earth happened, sir?" Martin stammered, raising himself on one elbow.

There was no reply. He struggled to his knees and called a second time. Sarah shouted too. Her voice sounded thin and frightened in the vastness of the night and the river.

As their eyes grew accustomed to

Continued on page 10



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- 7 What is a deciduous tree?
- 8 What tower is mentioned in the Book of Genesis?

Answers on page 11

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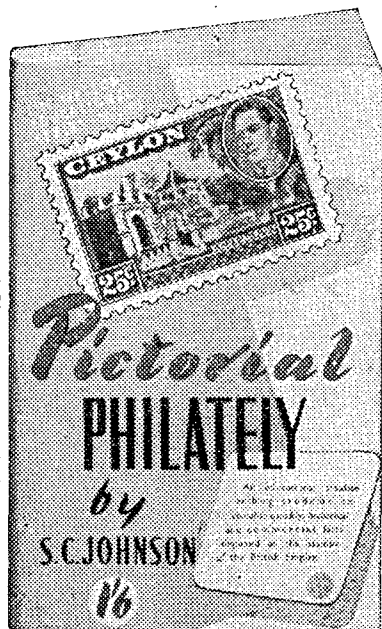


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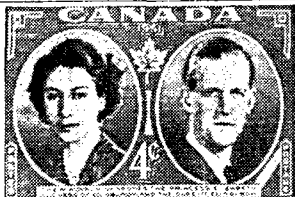
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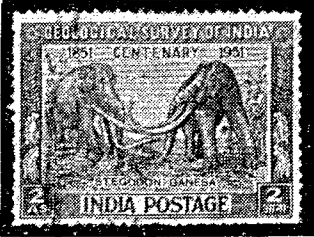
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SPORTS SHORTS

SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD Maureen Connolly, American lawn tennis champion, is learning baseball pitching. Her coach, Mrs. Eleanor Tennant, thinks that pitching will help to improve Maureen's service action.

ON Saturday, Heal's Fun City F.C., of the Bristol Wednesday League, will play against the Morgan family soccer team. The Morgan team, which was founded in 1919, consists of brothers and cousins of one family. They will be the first family team to play a league side.

DON McMILLAN recently smashed the Australian mile record with a time of 4 minutes 9 seconds, the Empire's fifth-best time. Still in his early 20s, Don is thought to be one of Roger Bannister's greatest rivals for next year's Olympic mile.

CRICKET enthusiasts in Yorkshire are to play a cricket match on Boxing Day morning at Whitkirk, near Leeds. Fine weather and sunshine are hoped for, but the cricketers say that even snow will not put them off!

CHRISTMAS will bring merely a brief break in the 48-hours-a-week training of 17-year-old Michael Carrington, who will be Britain's only representative in the men's ice skating championships at Oslo in February. For the past two years he has steadily progressed into world championship class and recently became the first holder of the Gold Star, the highest honour in British skating.

BRITAIN'S women representatives in the Olympic skating championships will be World, European, and British champion, Jeannette Altwegg; Pat Devries; Valda Osborn; and Barbara Wyatt. Jeannette has now only one skating honour still to win—an Olympic title.

JAROSLAV DROBNY, the Czech tennis player who now represents Egypt in international matches, recently took over the position of coach of Gstaad, a Swiss ice-hockey club. He was in Czechoslovakia's team in 1948.

BRITAIN'S women golfers have returned from South Africa after winning the rubber in a Test series by 2 matches to 1. Frances "Bunt" Stephens, the brilliant young Lancashire golfer, and Jean Donald, from Scotland, carried Britain's colours to victory in the final Test at Cape Town.

E. H. TEMME, one of our greatest Channel swimmers, was also a fine water polo player. He played for Plaistow United and also for England. Now his son John is playing water polo for Plaistow and gives promise of becoming an English international.

THE Lawn Tennis Association are running their third winter training school at Southdean, near Bognor. Thirty-two selected young players, all under 16, will be coached. The first few days will be given over to instructional classes, and then the most outstanding youngsters will play matches with professionals and well-known amateurs.

FROM Australia comes news of two 17-year-old tennis players, Ken Rosewall and Lewis Hoad, for whom a great future is predicted. Ken Rosewall has already beaten Lennart Bergelin, of Sweden, and was only narrowly beaten by Dick Savitt, the American Davis Cup player.

AFTER only two years in table tennis, 18-year-old Kathie Best, a Yorkshire girl, has represented England in Berlin and has won "caps" in our women's teams against Ireland and France. Towards the end of last season, she won the North of England open championship, and she may be chosen for the world championships in Bombay in February.

LACROSSE clubs have been finding difficulty in purchasing crosses, so, at the suggestion of the Buckhurst Hill Club, the South of England Association have been hunting around second-hand dealers and junk shops. The result is an equipment pool for schools and junior teams, to assist the ever-growing interest in lacrosse.

The Silver Gentleman Again

Continued from page 9

the darkness they could make out the long line of the bridge fading rapidly astern. But the figure they should have seen, perched paddle in hand on the edge of the boat, was there no longer.

"He's fallen overboard!" cried Martin in horror. "That crash just now—we must have collided with the bridge—"

"Oh, quick! Do something! He'll be drowned—turn the boat round, Martin!"

"I can't," he groaned.

SARAH had forgotten for the moment that against the current of the Rhône it was impossible to turn back. Every minute they were drifting farther and farther from their drowning friend, and there was nothing whatever they could do to help him.

"Can't you steer for the side?" she demanded. "Then we can tie

the boat up and run back on foot. At least we may be able to help him out if he swims as far as the bank!"

"We can try," said Martin grimly.

He crawled towards the stern, careful not to upset the boat which now, being lightened of the man's weight, rocked dangerously on the surface of the water.

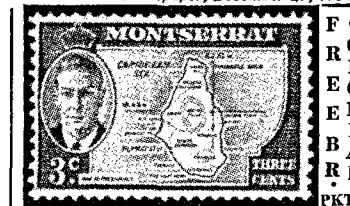
"It's no good," he called back, trying to keep his voice cool and firm.

"Why ever not?"

"The paddle went with him. Nothing to steer with now!"

Sarah bit her lip hard. She needed no further telling. They were almost as much at the mercy of the river as though they, too, were drowning in its waters.

Is the Silver Gentleman drowned? What will happen to Sarah and Martin? See next week's instalment.



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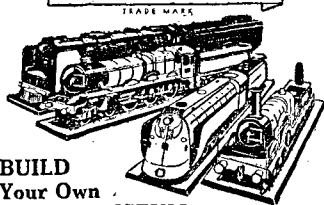
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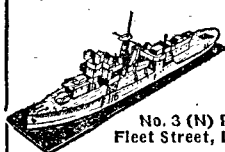
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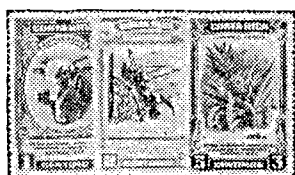
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THE CELESTIAL BULL

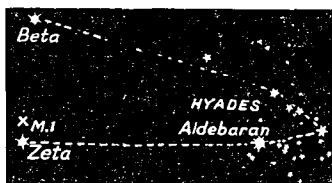
By the CN Astronomer

THE grand array of stars composing the celestial Bull, Taurus, may now be seen high in the south-east sky of an evening. They may be readily identified with the aid of the accompanying star-map.

The leading first-magnitude star Aldebaran, being of reddish tint, is a striking feature of the constellation, and has been known for some thousands of years as the Bull's Eye, owing to its position in the Head of Taurus.

The constellation, however, extends far to the left to the two bright stars Beta and Zeta, which indicate the tips of the Bull's Horns, and also away to the right so as to include the grand cluster of the Pleiades.

Aldebaran not only appears to be the brightest, but is also the nearest of all this stellar host that is visible to us. It is situated amid that V-shaped cluster of stars known as the Hyades, which were



regarded in ancient times as heralding the coming of the rainy season.

Actually Aldebaran is very much nearer to us than to any of them, being but 44 light-years distant—about 2,785,000 times farther than our Sun.

It belongs to the Giant class of suns, and has a diameter of 34 million miles, or nearly 40 times greater than the width of our Sun. If Aldebaran were as near to us as our Sun we should see this colossal sphere as a mass of rapidly whirling, reddish flame, seared with vast eruptive cyclones of fiery fury.

The surface of this great sun is not nearly as hot as that of our Sun, being about 3300 degrees centigrade compared with the average 6000 degrees of our Sun.

This is due to Aldebaran being in a more earlier state of stellar evolution. Consequently, the amount of heat and light radiated by Aldebaran is no more than

about 60 times greater than that radiated by our Sun, notwithstanding the immensity of its disc.

The fine sparkling cluster of stars, the Hyades, were so named by the ancient Greeks after the tearful daughters of Atlas. They are much grander than they appear to the naked eye, for there are about 80 of these suns, and all are singularly similar in type to our Sun, except that some are much larger.

Their similarity and the fact that they are all speeding eastwards through space at the same rate, keeping together like a flock of birds, is remarkable when the widespread extent of the cluster is considered. So great is this that it would take light about 35 years to cross it.

SOURCE OF 80 SUNS

Yet all these individual suns are obviously physically connected. They seem to have had a common origin in some remote region of space, since their paths if traced back are found to meet.

Of course, the distances of the individual suns from us vary considerably, but their average is about 136 light-years' journey. This is more than three times the distance of Aldebaran, which is also speeding in a different direction towards the south.

A small companion sun, or flaming world, accompanies Aldebaran, though at a very great distance away. It radiates only about one-thousandth of the light of our Sun, and therefore may not be much larger than Jupiter.

Some way to the left of Aldebaran will be seen the bright second-magnitude star Beta in Taurus. This is an immense sun radiating about 140 times more light than our Sun, but from a distance of 93 light-years.

Below Beta is the still greater sun Zeta. Above it, as indicated on the star-map (which should be kept for reference), is the wonderful nebula, Messier 1, which is shown by a X as it cannot be seen without telescopic aid. It will be considered in our next astronomical article.

G. F. M.

ANOTHER RADIO WON!

The winner of the Radio offered as First Prize in the "Which Came First" Competition is

Doreen Couston,
21 Victoria Terrace,
Dunfermline, Fife,

who gave an all-correct entry which was the most neatly written according to age.

The 10 Ten-Shilling notes have been awarded to the following, who also submitted correct entries, and which were adjudged the next best: Elizabeth Beynon, Crickhowell; Gerald Broadgate, Nuneaton; Jeremy Brockhouse, Bruton; Delphine Chinery, Lowestoft; John Clay, Woodthorpe; Patricia Hodder, Penzance; Thomas Sheppard, Clydebank; John Smale, Romford; Sally Thompson, Beckenham; Marjorie Winn, Chesham.

SOLUTION: 1. Gas street-lighting. 2. Sir Robert Peel's Metropolitan Police. 3. Fountain pen. 4. Postage stamp. 5. Victoria Cross. 6. Big Ben. 7. Penny-farthing bicycle. 8. Wright Brothers' aeroplane.

DUSTY WIND

When the wind is blowing from the north-east it gets very dusty down at Dartford, Kent.

The sanitary inspector reports that when the wind is in that quarter cement dust from Thames-side factories settles on the town at a daily rate of between 7 and 9½ tons per square mile. When the wind changes the deposit is only two tons to each square mile.

YOUNG QUIZ—answers

- 1 In 1901.
- 2 Miss Florence Horsbrugh.
- 3 Ross and Cromarty, Scotland.
- 4 A cave dweller.
5. Arizona.
- 6 Golf.
- 7 One that sheds its leaves annually.
8. The Tower of Babel.

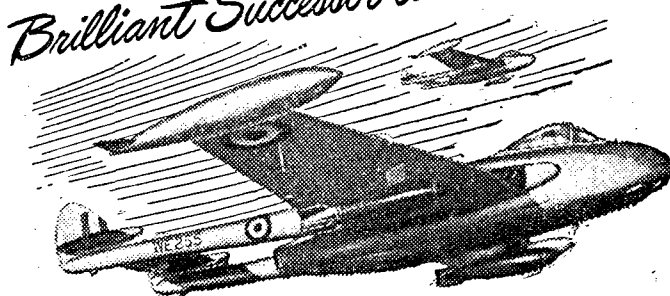
The Rolinx Paint Box advertised in the December 15 issue of Children's Newspaper was wrongly priced by the advertiser at 30s. It should have read 25s.

HO(A)RSE?
GO-SUCK A
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THE BRAN TUB

LAST LETTER

Of all the letters in the alphabet, It's zed that seems the cleverest to me. Although it often drops to Zero, why, The Zodiac has made it heavenly. It introduces people like the Zouave, The Zany, and the Zingari, and Zarp, And to the realm of music offers Zither, The instrument that's not unlike a harp.

Despite its being 26th and last, It leads to Zinc, and Zeetack from the sea, And Zoophyte, too. It cleverly produces, Among odd creatures of Zoology: The Zebra and the Zeekoe, and Zebu, And builds the Zoo to put them all on show. It helps us reach the Zenith of our joys, And also makes the Zephyr breezes blow.

It gives us Zip, it also gives us Zeal, And, if we're willing, adds to life a Zest, Which is, perhaps, the reason why I feel That zed, of all the alphabet, is best.

BEDTIME CORNER

Mr. Portly's Christmas Cards

It was almost Christmas, and Ann and Christopher were busily painting their Christmas cards at the playroom table, while Mr. Portly dozed before the fire.

The children each had a packet of white correspondence cards, and they were painting sprays of holly and mistletoe, with robins hopping around. And very fine they looked.

Even Mr. Portly, bored after a while with not being noticed, hopped onto the table and twitched his whiskers admiringly.

But presently Mummie called them down to supper. "Bring Mr. Portly, too," she said. "He must go out for his evening run."

After he had been out a few moments, however, Mr. Portly did not think this at all a good idea. It was drizzling with rain, and everywhere was muddy and wet. "I'm going back to the playroom," he said.

So he leapt onto the wall and ran up the sloping roof to see if the bathroom window was still open. It was, just enough for him to squeeze through. So

he was along the passage and into the playroom in a trice.

But when the children returned, what a sight met their eyes. Paint-water upset, cards all over the floor, and, right in the centre of five unused ones, the clear prints of Mr. Portly's muddy paws! And he had taken refuge under the sofa!

"What a waste!" wailed Ann as she picked up the spoilt cards.

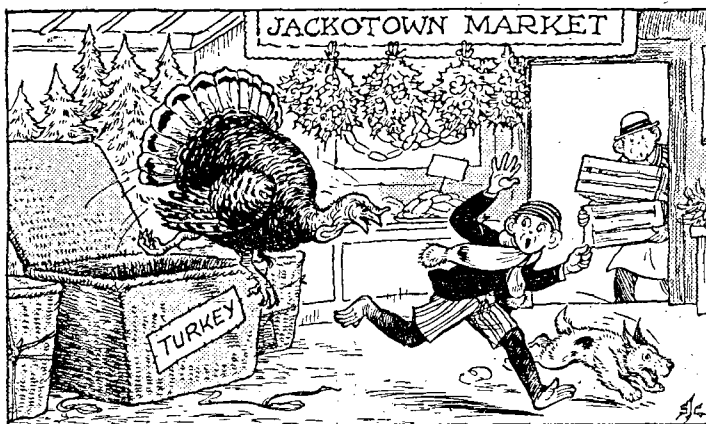
"There's no need to waste them," said Christopher. "Let's make them into Mr. Portly's own Christmas cards. We'll outline his paw-marks in black, and write 'Happy Christmas from Mr. Portly' on them, and send them to people who've been kind to him. Tinkle's mistress, and Penny's, and Snowball's; they all invite him in for a warm when we're out. And then there's Granny, and the Vet, too."

And a great success it was. For on Christmas morning Mr. Portly received five cards addressed to himself, all with cats on!

JANE THORNICROFT



TOO MUCH TURKEY FOR JACKO



Jackotown Market is always an interesting place, but never more so than at Christmas time. Recently, when Jacko was wandering around he came upon a quiet corner with no one in attendance. He started peering into interesting-looking hampers, and it was this that led to the trouble. For an extra large one, clearly marked "Turkey," contained a very large, and angry live turkey, which leapt after poor Jacko and chased him off the premises. Jacko is not sure that he likes turkey now.

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

"DID you hear about Jock McCulloch finding a box of corn plaster?"

"No; what happened?"

"He immediately went out and bought a pair of tight shoes."

Greedy Camilla

AT a party a girl called Camilla Grabbed twenty ice-creams of vanilla.

She turned rather green When she'd eaten nineteen, [iller.] And groaned: "I have never felt

Mistletoe

WHEN Shakespeare described Mistletoe as a "Baleful plant," he was probably thinking of the Nordic legend in which Baldur the Beautiful was fatally injured by a dart made from its wood.

Mistletoe is now usually associated with happier events, and its yellowish-green leaves and gleaming white berries play quite an important part in the Christmas decorations.

Mistletoe is a parasitic plant, living entirely on its host. In its wild state it may be found growing on various trees, including crab-apple, hawthorn, lime, poplar, and oak. Members of the thrush family feast on the wax-like berries, each of which contains a single seed.

RIDDLE IN RHYME

My first is both demure and neat, My second is a colour sweet. My whole in spring is often found, Forming a carpet on the ground.

Answer next week

CHAIN QUIZ

Solutions to the following clues are linked together, the last two letters of the first being the first two of the second, and so on.

1. French river rising from a glacier in Switzerland; it flows through Southern France, and enters the Mediterranean near Marseilles.

2. Roman emperor (A.D. 37-68), notorious for his tyranny and cruelty; blamed the Christians for the great fire in which much of Rome was destroyed in A.D. 64.

3. French revolutionary leader (1758-1794); believed himself to be the destined chief of the revolutionary forces, and took a main part in the "Reign of Terror."

4. One of twins who according to legend were brought up by a wolf and decided to found a city on the Tiber; was killed by his twin brother, who founded the city and called it Rome.

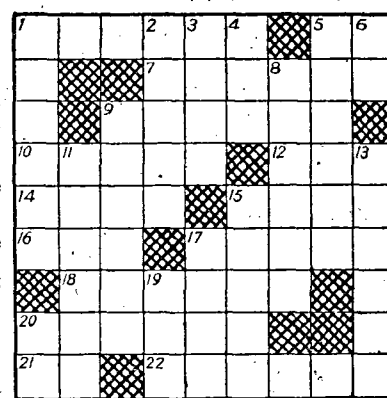
Answer next week

Crossword Puzzle

READING ACROSS. 1 Smother. 5 Greek letter P. 7 Birds of prey. 9 Mood. 10 Prim person. 12 Between. 14 Edges. 15 Competent. 16 Health resort. 17 Lock of hair. 18 Fix firmly. 20 Sends forth. 21 Teetotaler (abbrev.). 22 Come out.

READING DOWN. 1 Fairy-like creatures. 2 Lasting enmities. 3 Crippled. 4 Latin for Self. 5 Dangers. 6 Exists. 8 Rubbish. 9 Men and women. 11 Meal. 13 Want. 15 Got up. 17 Those. 19 Hint. 20 Pronoun.

Answer next week



A thought for others

DEAR SANTA CLAUS, I'd like so much—

I don't know where to start . . . But since my Dad is quite well off, I have it in my heart

To say that I would like you, sir, To think of girls and boys Who aren't as fortunate as me. Let them, sir, have your toys.

HOME AGAIN

AN elderly lady was hurrying to catch a train.

"Give me a return ticket," she told the railway clerk.

"Where to?" he asked patiently.

"Why, back here, of course," came the exasperated reply.

Number, please

A FARMER was asked how many sheep he had. He replied:

"I have fewer than a hundred, and if I divide the number by 2, by 3, by 4, by 5, or by 6, I shall always have one left over."

How many sheep had he?

Answer next week

FARMER GRAY EXPLAINS

HOLLY. "Look at the lovely red berries on our holly," boasted Ann to Farmer Gray.

"You have a fine lot," smiled the farmer.

"Apart from providing food for the birds, and for decorative purposes, I suppose holly is of little use," commented Don.

"You suppose wrongly," chuckled the farmer. "Holly wood is very hard and fine-grained, and it also takes dyes exceptionally well; consequently it is often substituted for more expensive woods.

At one time it was in demand for inlay work. Although young shoots gain height rapidly, the tree in general is a slow grower. Holly is hardy, and will grow on almost any soil, but it prefers a sandy loam."

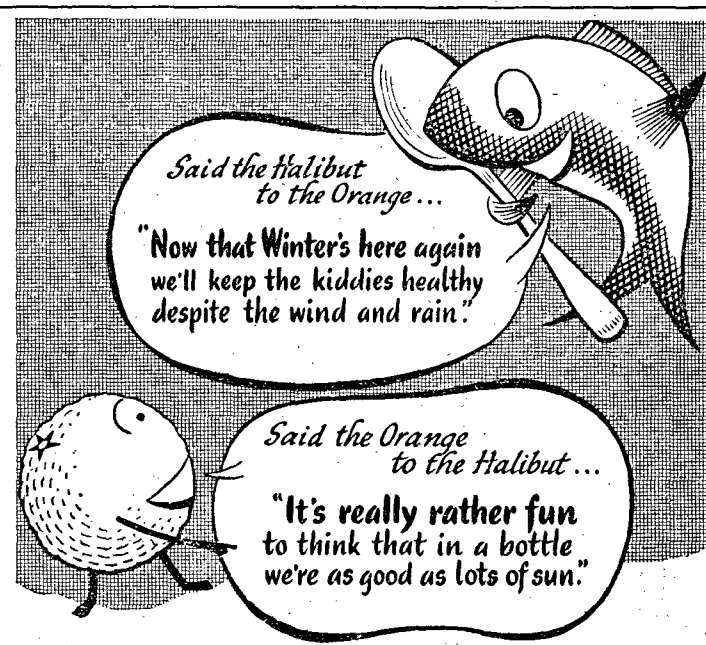
LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS

Town centres, Tirana (Iran), Fowey (owce), Ghent (hen), Neath (eat), Lille (ill).

Riddle in rhyme. Reindeer.

Chain Quiz. Droitwich, Chamberlain, Ingoldsby, Byzantium.

December thirds. Christine, Beethoven, Boccaccio, Gladstone, Eddington, De Quincey.



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